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[redacted]

1. The Astrakhan Directorate of Roadsteads Technical Fleet (ReydTekhFlot) is one of the seven regional organizations which are subordinate to the Chief Directorate of Maritime Routes (Glavnoye Upravleniye Morskikh Putey - GlavMorPut). The latter is itself one of the seven chief directorates (Glavk) which constitute the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet (MinMorFlot - MMF). The main function of all regional directorates consists in dredging the navigational channels for which the Chief Directorate of Maritime Routes is responsible. In view of the importance of the Volga traffic, the Astrakhan directorate has been given the additional responsibility of maintaining the navigational lights and buoy markings along the Volga channel, a function normally falling to the ports. The headquarters of the ReydTekhFlot are in Astrakhan, at No. 1, Sen Simon Ulitsa. [redacted] 25X1A
The chief of GlavMorPut usually spends several months during the navigation season in Astrakhan, personally supervising the dredging operations in this region because they are considered of such critical importance.

2. Before 1950 the Astrakhan directorate was called ReydMorPut but it had the same responsibilities and duties as ReydTekhFlot has at present. For five years, however, from 1945 to 1950, Reydtanker, a local petroleum shipping company, had been forced to assume responsibility for dredging activities without being assigned any personnel from ReydMorPut, which

25X1A

[redacted]

caused considerable difficulties. In 1950 ReydMorPut became ReydTekhFlot, and once more this organization was made responsible for dredging.

3. The main task of ReydTekhFlot is to insure the maintenance and upkeep of two channels, the Volga-Caspian and the Ural-Caspian. Both of these are divided into two main sections, the river stretch (distantsiya) and the sea-stretch. The river stretch of the Volga-Caspian channel extends for about 90 km from Il'inka south to Olya and the sea stretch from Olya to the Volga-Caspian lighthouse. /See Encl (A)/ On the Ural-Caspian channel the river stretch extends from some place on the river south of Gur'yev down to the Island of Peshnoy /4649N-5142E/. The sea stretch goes from there to the Gur'yev roadsteads, a distance of some 20 km.

The Volga-Caspian Channel

4. On the river stretch of this channel [redacted] the following information: 25X1A

(a) It is marked by buoys, painted red on one side and white on the other, placed one every kilometer. At night their emplacement is marked by kerosene lamps. At the narrowest places the channel is only about 12 m, not wide enough to permit two-way traffic. At these points 20 m high towers have been built on wooden pyramids to control the traffic. The signals used vary from tower to tower and may be given with flags, with lamps, or by hand.

(b) There are several water level check stations along the channel which move from place to place as the condition of the river is constantly changing. The minimum depth required is 2.5 m. Shallow spots (perekat) are particularly numerous in July and August. The most dangerous spot on the river channel is called Sergeyevskoye Koleno (bend). While the average current is about five kilometers per hour, it may be as high as 10 km at this spot, with eddies, which render navigation difficult, particularly for a tug with barges in tow. A similar danger spot is at Kharbay.

(c) To check the beacon lights and to keep the buoys in place, maintenance crews are stationed every two kilometers along this channel. As they are very poorly paid, these crews have devised their own means for improving their standard of living. They tie a line from the shore to a buoy in such a way that the passage of a tug will cause the buoy to disappear under water. At this moment the maintenance crew makes a loud outcry and forces the tug to stop until the situation is remedied. Normally such an incident would call for a special report; but, after receiving a few rubles from the tug, the maintenance men agree to take care of the damage.

(d) This channel is open to navigation from the end of March to the beginning of December. Early in spring when the ice is coming down the river, the season is opened by a few icebreakers which make the run down from Astrakhan ahead of the regular vessels. Three tugboats of Reydtanker , a petroleum shipping company, are used for this purpose. The Caspian State Fisheries also have one conventional icebreaker, the Sergo Ordzhonikidze , which is used for clearing the channel.

5. The sea stretch of the Volga-Caspian channel is itself subdivided into two sections, the lighted part and the beacon portion:

   (a) The lighted part, about 30 km long, is marked by large, stationary boats, placed about two km apart, equipped with kerosene lights (ognevka), which serve as lighthouses. Between these boats the channel is marked by ordinary poles. The channel is about three to 3.5 m deep on the average but there are some sections with shallows. The average width is around 40 m and there are no narrow sections in this stretch.

   (b) The beacon part is marked by red and white metal buoys, attached to concrete blocks. For night traffic they are provided with carbide lamps. The curves on this channel are dangerous for long tows. Normally a tow consists of two or three barges, separated by some 250 m, which constitutes a total length of 500 to 600 m. The new barges require six men on the rudder to take care of the steering.

   (c) There is a special hoist ship, provided with a hand crank, for lifting sunken buoys. The foremen of the maintenance crews, however, are reluctant to use any machinery. They fear that any damage to it will be blamed on them and that they may be sent to a forced labor camp. In general they prefer to call on unskilled labor, which is easily procured.

Ural Caspian Channel

6. On the river stretch of this channel [redacted] the following the information: 25X1A

   (a) Since 1949 dredging of the channel from Peshnoy Island to the north has been abandoned because the maintenance costs were excessive. Tugs and barges no longer go beyond Peshnoy and there is no passenger service to Gur'yev. Only fishermen and ReydTanker personnel who are using small craft can come up the river stretch.

   (b) The beacons and towers which mark this stretch are still being maintained by special crews which have no other work.

   (c) There is much talk about re-opening the channel to regular traffic but I do not believe that the work will ever be undertaken. I know that once even a dredge got mired in the sand banks and could only be recovered after great difficulties. There is a project for covering the banks with rocks and bricks in order to prevent them from slipping into the channel.

7. The sea stretch of the channel is about 20 km long, about 15 m wide on the average, and has a maximum depth of 2.5 m. It is marked by four lighthouses, beacons and wooden posts. Two dredges are needed continously on this section to keep it open. Oil cargoes are transloaded at the Gur'yev Roadsteads from Reydtanker barges into special barges for delivery to Peshnoy, where the oil is stored or sent on to Gur'yev by pipe line.

Organization of ReydTekh Flot

8. The Astrakhan Directorate of Roadsteads Technical Fleet is headed by an Engineer-Captain, Merchant Fleet, 1st Class. The deputy chief, who is also Chief Engineer, is Vladimir Stepanov, Engineer-Captain, Merchant Fleet, 2nd Class. The directorate is divided into the following sections:

(a) Planning and Economic Section. There are about five people in this section, two engineers and three economists. They make plans for construction work and financial estimates to determine the relative amounts required for wages and materials.

(b) The Dredging Machinery Section (SudoMekhanicheskiy Otdel) is headed by Engineer-Captain, MF, 3rd Class, (fnu) Feldman. The main responsibility of this section is maintenance and exploitation of the machinery in the Technical Fleet. Exploitation includes the giving of specific directions on the manner in which the equipment should be used, such as operating temperatures, speeds, and pressures.

(c) The Designing Section (Konstruktorskiy Otdel) has four people who are engineers, technicians, and draftsmen. They are charged with the preparation of blueprints of machinery and parts, and must give directions for the repair of machinery and canals.

(d) The Accounting Office is headed by Senior Lieutenant (fnu) Ovchinnikov, a chief accountant, who has four assistants.

(e) The Labor and Wages Section is headed by Sergey Kurylov, who has three assistants.

(f) The Finance Section has three people performing purely administrative functions.

(g) The Personnel Section is headed by Chemodanov (fnu), who has four assistants. It deals with routine matters affecting employees and workers.

(h) The Billeting Section is made up of two people only, who work in the apartment house which ReyTekhFlot maintains in Astrakhan for personnel stationed there.

(i) The Administrative Section is made up of four or five people who deal in routine matters such as registry of incoming and outgoing mail, issuing uniform regulations, enforcement of administrative regulations, transportation, and typing.

(j) The Supply Section (Otdel Snabzheniya). The main duty of this section is supplying subordinate units with engineer, electrical, and technical equipment, POL products, and necessary clothing gear. The subordinate units of the directorate make periodic requests for such supplies. The supply section prepares a master list, covering quantities and cost of items, and submits it to the offices of the Chief Directorate of Maritime Routes (GlavMorPut) in Moscow, where the requirements are checked and evaluated. The requests are normally cut down before being approved and then forwarded to the Planning and Economic Section of GlavMorPut, which makes the necessary arrangements for payment of the supplies.

(k) The Mobilization and Classified Documents Section (Voyennyy i Spets Otdel) is made up of three people, responsible for making mobilization preparations and handling all classified documents. There is also an inspector in this section, presumably acting for MGB, who checks on the activities of the personnel for reliability and dependability. [redacted] 25X1A following details on this section:

(1) All personnel of ReydTekhFlot who are afloat are exempted from mobilization and their names are carried in a special file (spets uchet) of the Astrakhan Voyenkomat . The individual records which are kept on all employees of the directorate have a special notation to indicate whether or not the individual is subject to mobilization.

(2) An unclassified War Emergency Alert (Raspisaniye boyevoy trevogi), published in 1949, listed the measures to be taken in the event of immediate mobilization for wartime conditions. These measures included the designation of gun crews and damage control crews, the specific steps to be taken in order to protect the ships, such as the removal of wood and other inflammable materials; the dredges were to be armed with machine guns and small caliber AA weapons; the regular crews of the dredges were to be given instruction in handling these weapons in order to man the guns. Other regulations were sent out prescribing the camouflage of the vessels and the installations belonging to the directorate. All this is still on paper only and, [redacted] 25X1A
25X1A [redacted] neither the weapons or camouflage materials have been received or even scheduled for delivery.

(3) In 1950 a secret decree was issued by the MMF prescribing the establishment of war mobilization stocks to consist of items used in peacetime operations, now classified as war materials. Items in current use which were listed in this decree included tugboats, all metal vessels, motorized and horsedrawn vehicles, horses, rescue equipment, weapons, non-ferrous metals, cotton and woolen materials, navigation equipment and instruments, internal combustion engines, and others. All stocks of finished products and raw materials were to be registered and maintained at prescribed levels. Expenditure accounts for all items acquired had to be kept also.

(4) Every agency and organization belonging to the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet has a similar mobilization section to insure that prescribed standards and measures for mobilization are adhered to and that the mobilization reserves /Russian term/ are actually maintained in readiness and at the proper levels. 25X1C

(5) [redacted]

(6) The Construction Engineer is not a section but an individual needed by ReydTekhFlot, which, contrary to Reydtanker, does not have its own construction agencies. When ReydTekhFlot needs some construction work done, its civil engineer concludes a contract for this work with a separate agency. He is also responsible for the maintenance of buildings and installations of ReydTekhFlot.

Equipment of ReydTekhFlot

9. The equipment used by ReydTekhFlot is quite old and no new techniques have been developed for its use. It consists mostly of tugs and barges, as follows:

(a) There are about 10 to 12 tugs in operation, all but one of them 40 to 50 years old. They are of the propeller-type, with steam propulsion and compound engines, and have a speed of seven to nine knots without a tow. [redacted] the following names: 25X1A
Volya, Stepan Razin, Krasnaya Zarya, and V'yuga. This last
25X1A [redacted] tug does not have the same characteristics as the others and it is either an American lend-lease vessel or was received as reparations from Germany. It has a Diesel engine, no compressor, and a speed of 12 km per hour. An "icebreaker belt", three to five feet wide and 10 mm thick, was fastened around the V'yuga's hull although it is not used for actual icebreaking operations but only to clear away floating ice.

(b) There are about 10 dredges, seven dipper dredges, two hydraulic dredges, and one combined hydraulic-dipper dredge. All these dredges have wooden hulls and constitute very old dredging
25X1A equipment, built, [redacted] in Krasnoye Sormovo. The dredges burn "topochnyy" or "flotskiy" mazut. [redacted] 25X1A
of the individual dredges but in the postwar period the yearly total of ReydTekhFlot was eight to nine million cubic meters of silt for the navigation season. In 1951 the total was 10 million cubic meters. This total must be divided proportionately between the Ural-Caspian project, using two or three dredges, and the Volga-Caspian project, which uses seven or eight dredges.

(c) There are about 20 steel barges, varying in capacity between 500 and 1,000 tons, which are used for transporting the dredged material. All these barges are old, in poor condition, and of the conventional type.

/The zavod I/N Karl Marx, used by ReydTekhFlot for its ship repair, will be discussed in a subsequent report on the Chief Directorate of Industrial Enterprises (GlavMorProm)./

10. Representatives of the Harbor Inspectorates are responsible for the inspection of shipboard equipment such as anchors, chains, and steel cables. Without their approval, vessels cannot leave port.

11. ReydTekhFlot employs about 800 to 900 people; about 100 of these work on shore. The training of this personnel and new recruits is done in training schools and courses of instruction directed by Reydtanker, which is compensated for it by ReydTekhFlot. The training given by ReydTekhFlot itself consists of on-the-job training, called

individual training, and brigade instruction. The latter means that a senior worker will instruct three or four individuals and get a bonus of 25 rubles a month from ReydTekhFlot if his pupils pass the examination for the next higher rating. Reydtanker is responsible for propaganda and political indoctrination of the personnel employed by ReydTekhFlot.

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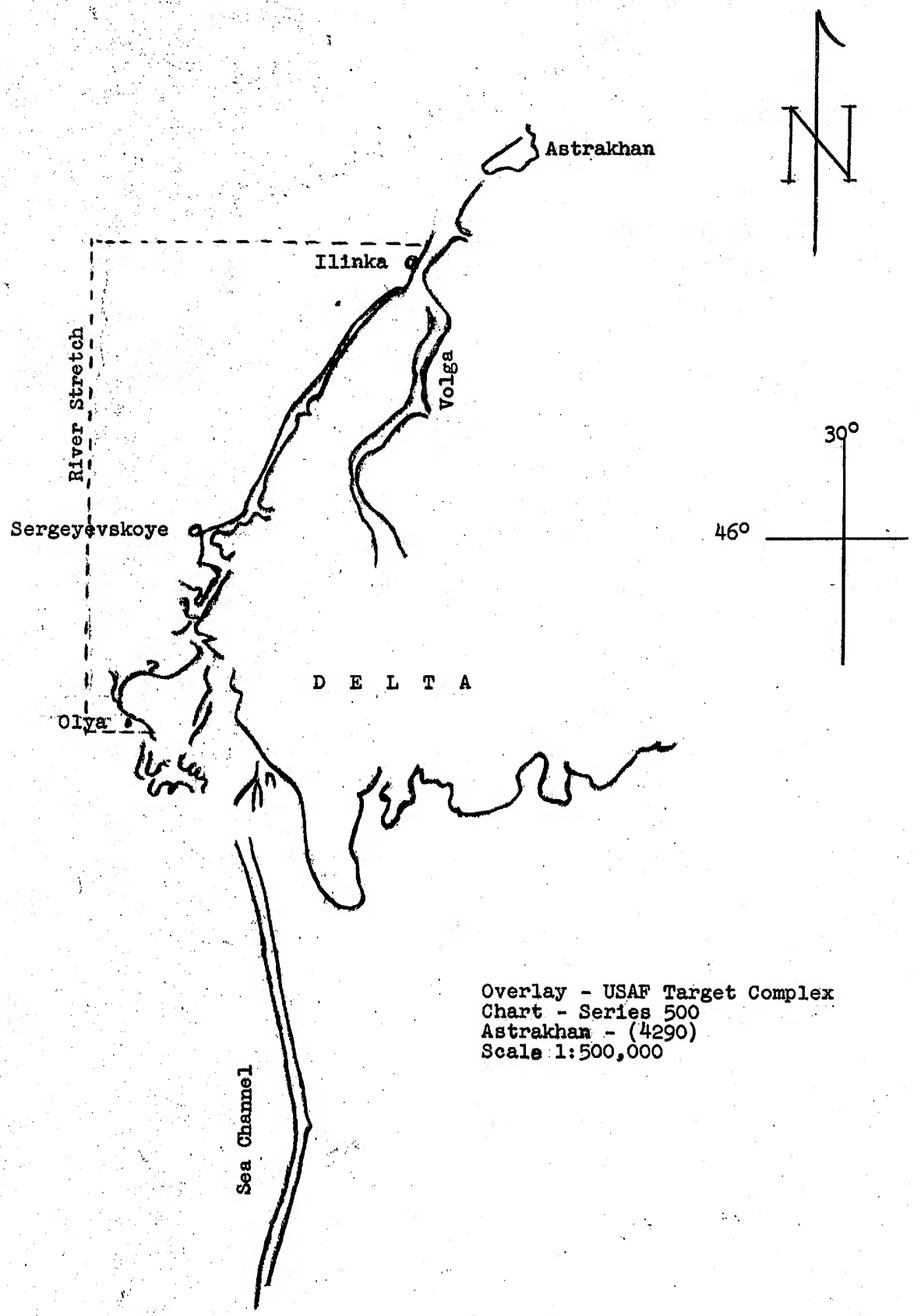
Enclosure (A): Overlay - USAF Target Complex Chart - Series 500
Astrakhan - (4290) Scale 1:500,000

25X1A * See [redacted]

ENCLOSURE (A) SECRET/SECURITY INFORMATION [redacted] 25X1A



Overlay - USAF Target Complex
Chart - Series 500
Astrakhan - (4290)
Scale 1:500,000

SECRET/SECURITY INFORMATION